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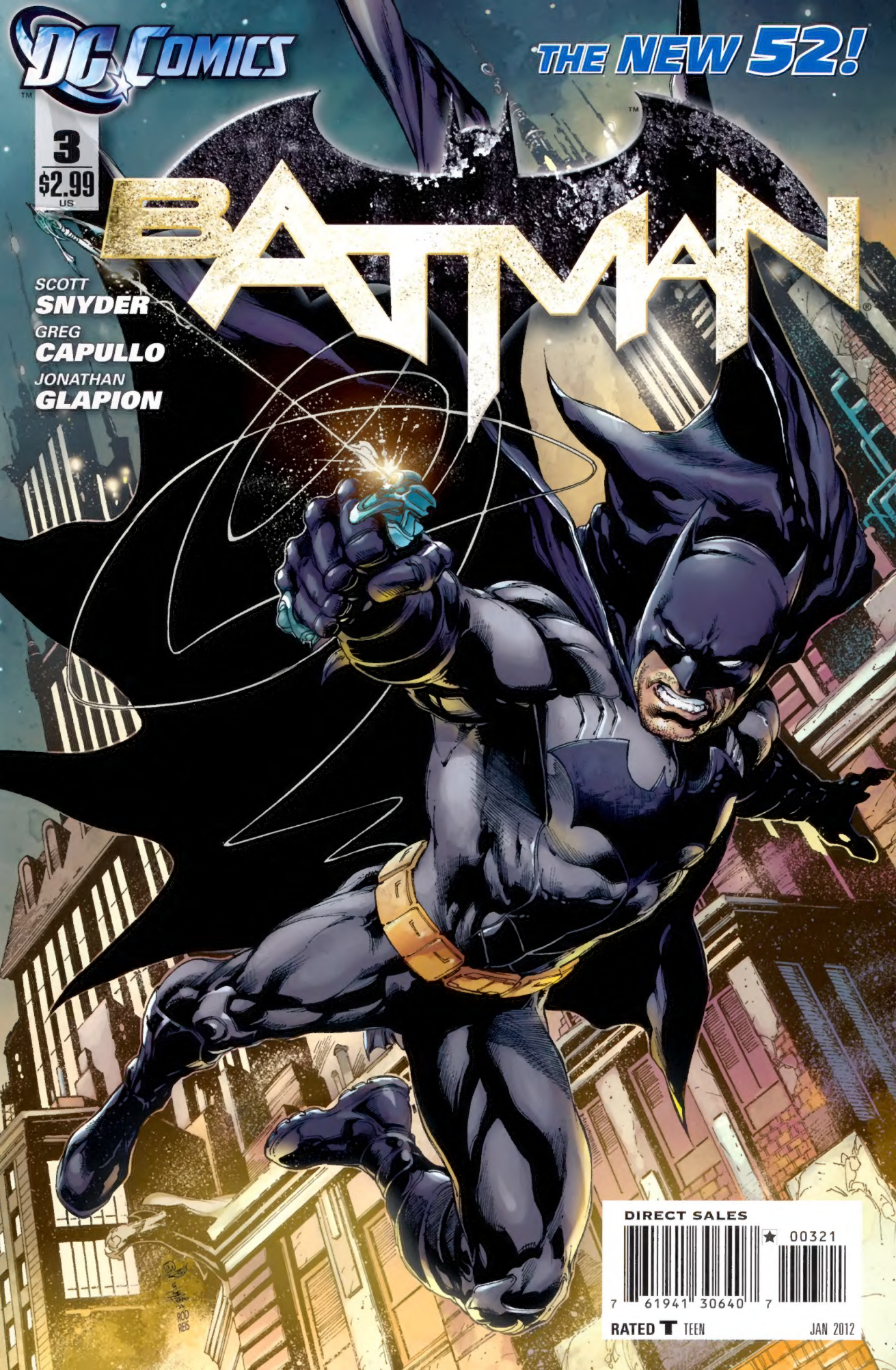
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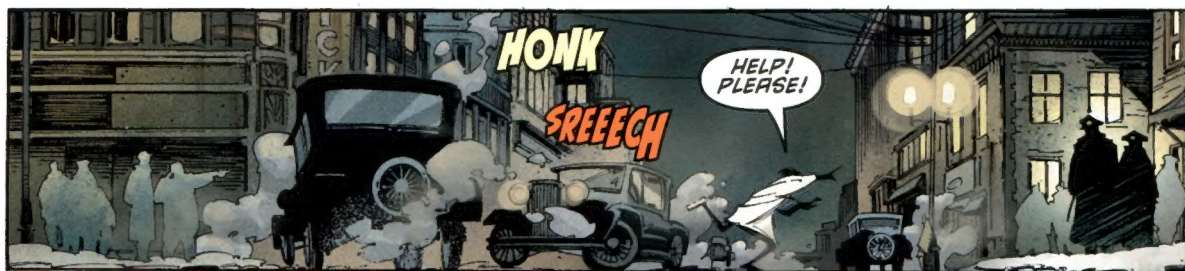
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THEY'RE  
AFTER ME!  
PLEASE!

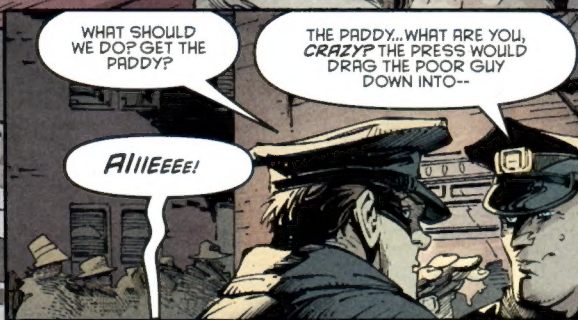
IT'S OKAY,  
MR. WAYNE.  
WE'RE HERE. NOW...  
WHO'S AFTER  
YOU?



THEY'RE  
EVERYWHERE, DON'T  
YOU SEE? THE THIRTEENTH  
HOUR, IT'S UPON US!  
THEY'RE COMING!



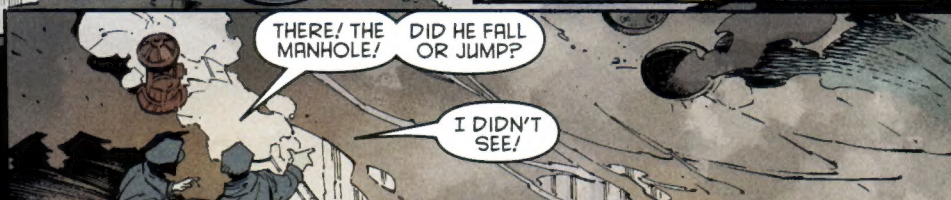
AND THEIR NESTS--  
THEIR *NESTS* ARE ALL  
AROUND! THEY'RE IN MY  
HOME! MY HOME!  
PLEASE!



WHAT SHOULD  
WE DO? GET THE  
PADDY?

THE PADDY..WHAT ARE YOU,  
*CRAZY*? THE PRESS WOULD  
DRAG THE POOR GUY  
DOWN INTO--

AIIIEEEE!



THERE! THE  
MANHOLE!

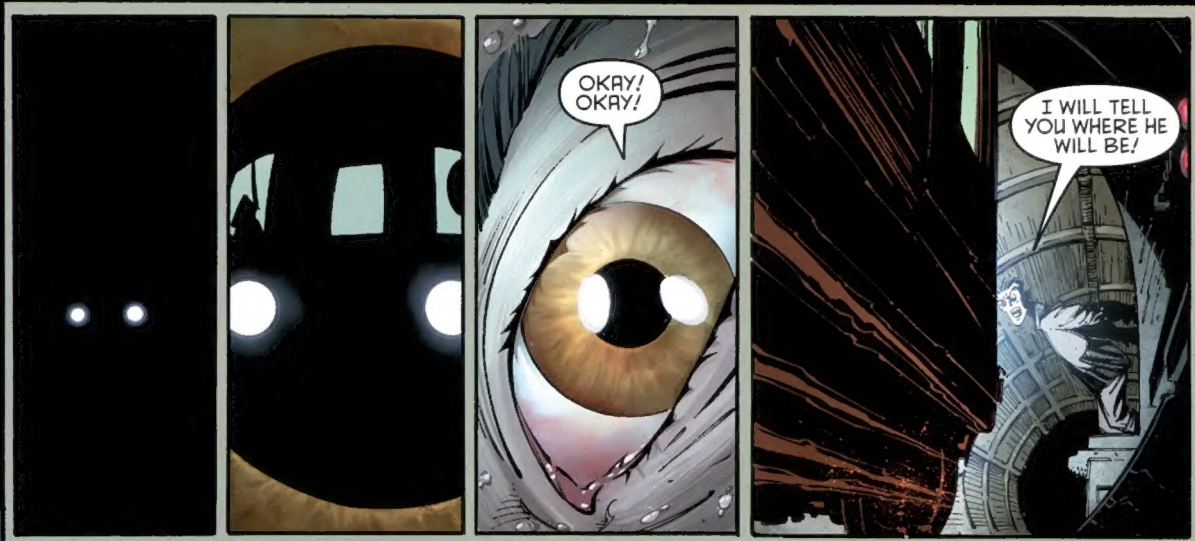
DID HE FALL  
OR JUMP?

I DIDN'T  
SEE!



MR. WAYNE!  
MR. WAYNE!  
ARE YOU DOWN  
THERE?!





**GOTHAM CITY. NOW...**



YOU SAY YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A MAN IN A DARK COSTUME, AN ENFORCER WITH A MASK TO HIDE HIS FACE. I WILL TELL YOU THAT TOMORROW...


...HEH HEH... THERE WILL BE ONE AT THE MORGUE!

*The man making the questionable jokes is named Luka Volk.*




*He's the "pakhan" of a Gotham branch of the Ukrainian mob.*




A group of five men, the Whisper Gang, are attacking Batman. They are wearing masks and holding various weapons like knives and crowbars. Batman is in the center, fighting them off. The scene is chaotic with sparks and motion lines.


They call themselves  
"Whisper Gang."

A close-up of a large, muscular man with a green mask and a spiked collar. He is looking down at a smaller man who is lying on the ground. The background shows a dark, industrial setting with a large pipe.


And they're one of five gangs  
that control smuggling in  
and out of Gotham by rail.

A close-up of an assassin in a dark suit and mask, holding a knife and attacking Batman. The scene is dark and dramatic, with a strong light source creating a silhouette effect.

Two days ago, an assassin  
dressed like an owl tried to  
kill me while I was meeting  
with a local politician.

A close-up of Batman's hand holding a knife. The hand is wearing a black glove. The background is dark and blurry.

With no security footage of the  
assassin coming or going from Old  
Wayne Tower, my assumption is that  
he came in through the rail lines  
that converge beneath the building...

Batman is fighting a man in a brown jacket. The man is holding a knife and attacking Batman. The scene is dynamic with motion lines and a dark background.


... then found a way up  
through the service elevators.  
Which means one of the  
rail gangs saw him and  
took some toll from him.

The gangs have divided  
the lines among them.

One line for each gang.  
One is Yakuza. One is La Eme.  
Five rail lines. Five gangs.

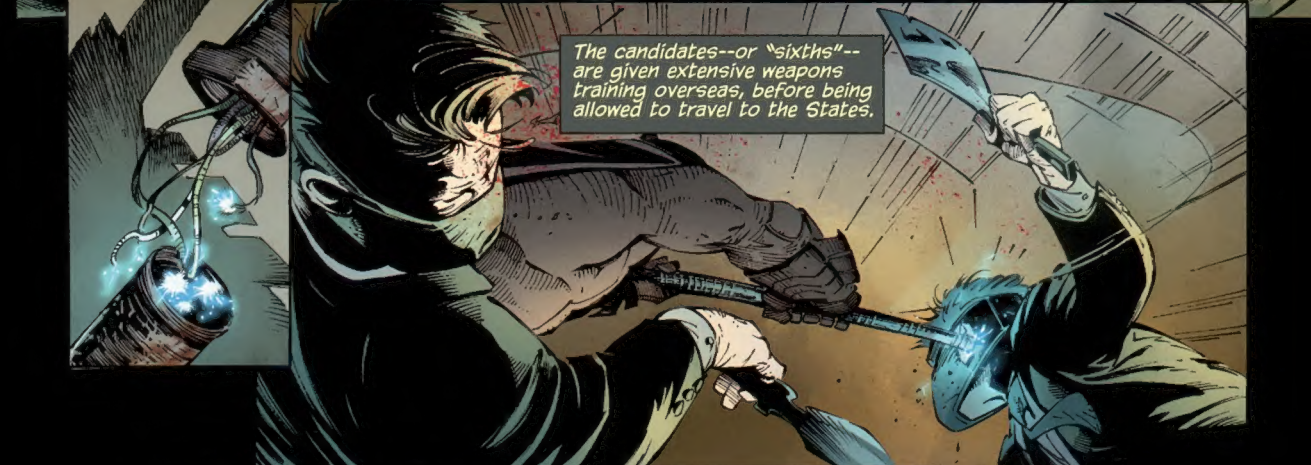




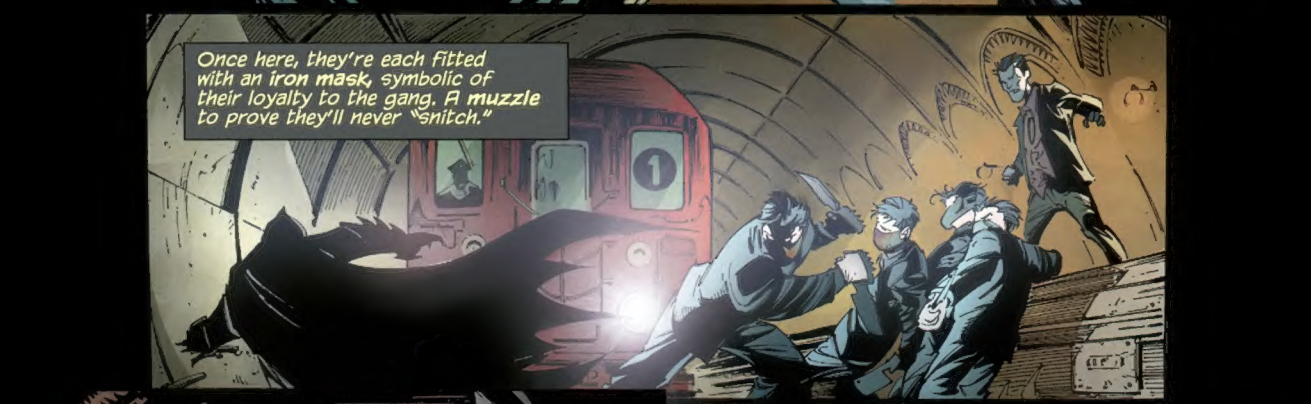


I've already chatted with the other four gangs.


Whisper Gang is known to be the most vicious and brutal of the five, though.



The candidates--or "sixths"--are given extensive weapons training overseas, before being allowed to travel to the States.



Once here, they're each fitted with an iron mask, symbolic of their loyalty to the gang. A muzzle to prove they'll never "snitch."



The mask is soldered together at the back of the head, and can't be removed for at least a year, until the sixth has proven himself.

All of which makes them pretty tough...





...unless you're  
a magnet.



PLEASE!  
I WAS--

ABOUT TO  
TELL ME *EVERYTHING*  
*YOU KNOW* ABOUT  
THE ASSASSIN YOU LET  
INTO OLD WAYNE  
TOWER.



BUT I TELL  
THE *TRUTH*! I DON'T  
KNOW ANYTHING  
ABOUT THIS "OWL"  
MAN!

...LIE DETECTION  
ASSESSING... ASSESSING

TRUTH.

GET  
OUT OF MY  
TUNNELS.





SECOND MATRIX READY  
FOR VOICE ANALYSIS.

LAUNCH  
VOICE  
ANALYSIS.

NOW  
LET'S SEE WHO  
YOU ARE.



"BRUCE WAYNE.  
THE COURT OF OWLS  
HAS SENTENCED  
YOU TO DIE."

SEARCHING.  
SEARCHING...  
VOICE ANALYSIS:  
SEARCH FAILED.

DAMN.  
RUN AGAIN.

I'LL  
LEAVE THIS IN  
ARM'S REACH,  
SIR.



IF I MAY,  
THOUGH. THE MORNING  
BEFORE LAST, I CAME  
ACROSS AN ARTICLE IN  
THE SCIENCES PORTION  
OF THE GAZETTE.

IT APPEARS  
THAT RESEARCHERS  
IN GERMANY--  
ORNITHOLOGISTS--  
RECENTLY DISCOVERED  
THAT MOST BATS DEPEND  
ON THE SUNSET FOR  
LONG-DISTANCE  
NAVIGATION.



I KNOW  
PLENTY ABOUT  
BATS, ALFRED.  
TELL ME WHAT YOU  
KNOW ABOUT  
OWLS.

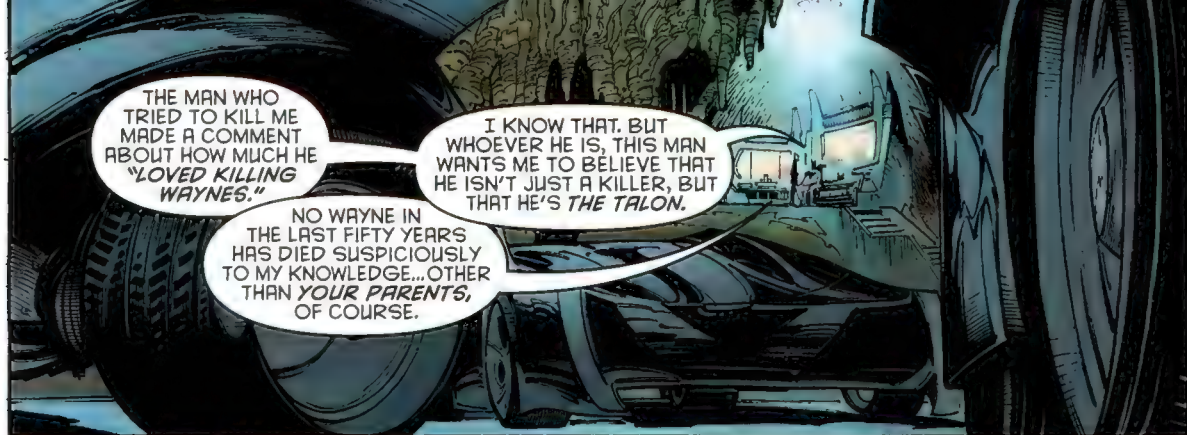


WHICH IS TO  
SAY THEY NEED  
TO EXPERIENCE  
TWILIGHT IN ORDER  
TO CALIBRATE  
THEIR INTERNAL  
COMPASS.

IN OTHER  
WORDS, MASTER  
BRUCE, BATS NEED  
A LITTLE *SUNLIGHT*  
ONCE IN A WHILE TO  
FLY STRAIGHT, IF  
YOU WILL.

SIR?





THE MAN WHO TRIED TO KILL ME MADE A COMMENT ABOUT HOW MUCH HE "LOVED KILLING WAYNES."

I KNOW THAT. BUT WHOEVER HE IS, THIS MAN WANTS ME TO BELIEVE THAT HE ISN'T JUST A KILLER, BUT THAT HE'S *THE TALON*.

NO WAYNE IN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS HAS DIED SUSPICIOUSLY TO MY KNOWLEDGE...OTHER THAN *YOUR PARENTS*, OF COURSE.

THE TALON? FROM THE COURT OF OWLS FOLKSONG?

EXCEPT HE WANTS ME TO BELIEVE THAT THE COURT ISN'T A FOLKTALE...

...THAT IN REALITY SOME SECRET GROUP OF MEN HAS ACTUALLY BEEN RULING GOTHAM FROM THE SHADOWS SINCE COLONIAL TIMES.

SO I'M ASSUMING THE "WAYNE KILLING" HE'S REFERRING TO INVOLVES SOME INCIDENT FROM THE PAST. SOMETHING TO GIVE CREDIBILITY TO THE BEDTIME STORY.

SO AGAIN... WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OWLS?

JUST COMMON TRIVIA--THEY'RE CARNIVOROUS. MASTERS OF CAMOUFLAGE... THEY'RE NATURAL PREDATORS OF BATS...

...BUT IN RELATION TO YOUR FAMILY, SIR, THE ONLY REFERENCE I CAN THINK OF IS IRRELEVANT.

I HAVE AN APPARENTLY UNSTOPPABLE KILLER RUNNING AROUND GOTHAM WITH *MY NAME* ON HIS LIST. NOTHING'S IRRELEVANT AT THIS POINT, ALFRED.


YOUR GREAT, GREAT-GRANDFATHER, *ALAN WAYNE*. NEAR THE END OF HIS LIFE, HE SUFFERED FROM AGGRESSIVE SENILITY.

SO I'VE HEARD.




YES, BUT HE SUPPOSEDLY DEVELOPED A PARTICULAR OBSESSION WITH OWLS.






HE SUFFERED FROM A SEVERE PARANOIA ABOUT THE BIRDS, SOME OBSESSION WITH THE IDEA THAT THEY WERE *CONSPIRING* AGAINST HIM.



TO HEAR MY FATHER TELL IT, MASTER ALAN BOARDED UP HIS WINDOWS FOR FEAR THAT ONE NIGHT THE OWLS WOULD COME FOR HIM.



BUT EVEN THIS DIDN'T HELP, AS HE SOON BECAME GRIPPED BY THE NOTION THAT THEY--THE OWLS-- WERE ROOSTING INSIDE HIS HOME. IN THE WALLS.

IF YOU LOOK AT HIS LAST PORTRAIT IN THE GALLERY, AT THE BUILDINGS HE DESIGNED, FEATURED IN THE BACKGROUND, YOU'LL NOTICE OWLS PERCHED ALONG THE MOLDINGS.




BUT HIS DEATH...


NO, YOU'RE CORRECT. HE DROWNED, HAVING FALLEN INTO AN OPEN MANHOLE IN THE GOTHAM SEWER. NO FOUL PLAY WAS SUSPECTED.

I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF PREPARING YOU SOME BLACK TEA WITH MEDICINAL--

NO TIME, ALFRED. I'M ON MY WAY OUT.

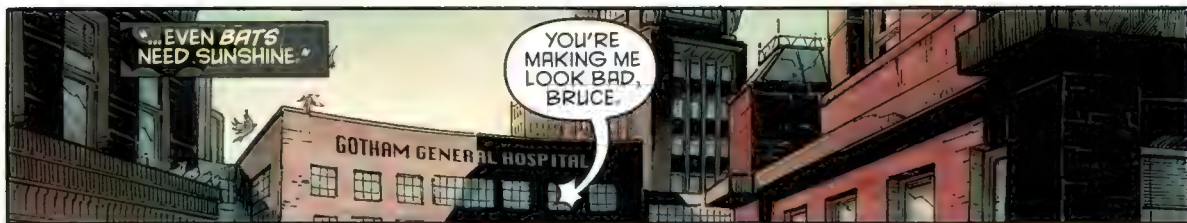


MAY I SUGGEST YOU TAKE THE DAY TO REST, SIR. WITH THE INJURIES YOU SUSTAINED IN THE FALL, AND THE STAB WOUNDS--



YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, ALFRED...





YOU'RE MAKING ME LOOK BAD, BRUCE.



AFTER ALL, I TOOK ONE KNIFE...YOU TOOK TWO AND GOT KICKED OUT A THIRTY-STORY WINDOW.

BUT I'M THE ONE IN BED, EATING JELLO IN A BUTTLESS NIGHTGOWN. GOOD THING YOU'RE NOT RUNNING AGAINST ME.

ACTUALLY, LINCOLN, I AM. THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO TELL YOU.



HEH  
->KOFF KOFF->  
DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH.



ACTUALLY, I WANTED TO SPEAK WITH YOU PRIVATELY. JUST BEFORE THAT ATTACKER CAME IN, YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING **BAD** HAVING RETURNED TO GOTHAM.

YES  
->KOFF->



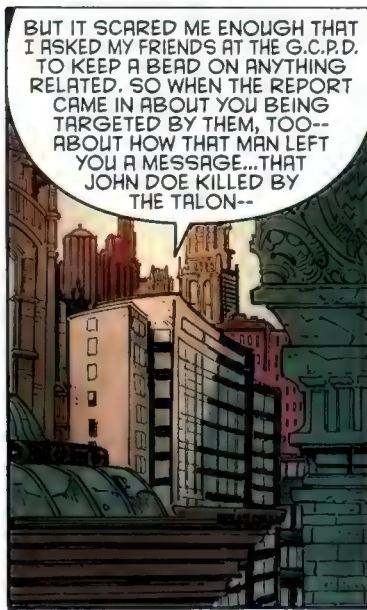
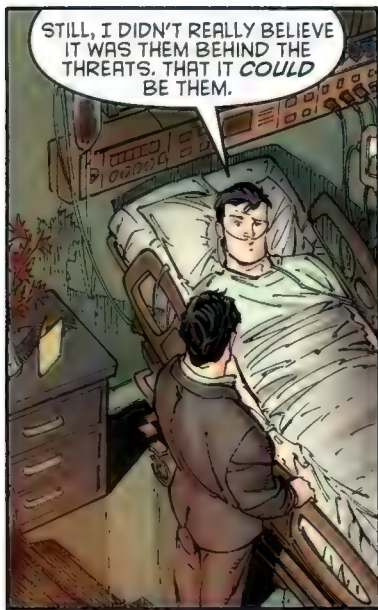
I'D BEEN GETTING **WARNINGS**, BRUCE. WHISPERS FROM PEOPLE TO DROP MY BID FOR MAYOR.

AND THEN, TWO WEEKS AGO, I WOKE TO FIND AN OWL IN MY APARTMENT.



JUST PERCHED THERE IN MY CLOSET. A LITTLE PILE OF BONES BENEATH IT.









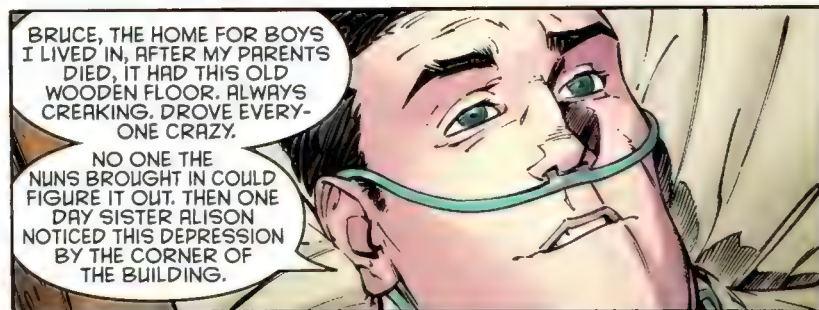
I'M NOT AFRAID OF GHOST STORIES. AND YOU SHOULDN'T BE, EITHER.



HELL YES, I'M AFRAID. BUT I'M NOT DROPPING MY BID FOR MAYOR, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE IMPLYING.

GOTHAM HAS GIVEN ME EVERYTHING I HAVE. AND I'LL BE DAMNED IF I HAND IT OVER TO BUNCH OF OLD BIRDS.

THEN YOU HAVE MY VOTE, LINCOLN.



BRUCE, THE HOME FOR BOYS I LIVED IN, AFTER MY PARENTS DIED, IT HAD THIS OLD WOODEN FLOOR. ALWAYS CREAKING. DROVE EVERYONE CRAZY.

NO ONE THE NUNS BROUGHT IN COULD FIGURE IT OUT. THEN ONE DAY SISTER ALISON NOTICED THIS DEPRESSION BY THE CORNER OF THE BUILDING.



TURNS OUT, THE PLACE WAS ON A SINKHOLE. WITHIN A YEAR, THE WHOLE BUILDING WOULD'VE COLLAPSED WITH US INSIDE, IF SHE HADN'T REALIZED IT.



MY POINT IS, SOMETIMES WE BECOME SO CONCERNED WITH LITTLE DANGERS THAT WE DON'T SEE THE BIG ONE, RIGHT BENEATH OUR FEET. THAT'S ALL.



I'M SORRY, LINCOLN. I HAVE TO GO. I'M GOING TO HAVE MY OWN PEOPLE WATCH YOUR ROOM. THEY'RE THE BEST. GET SOME SLEEP.

BRUCE?



BUT, BRUCE, IF THEY'RE WATCHING ME...



"...WHO'S  
WATCHING  
YOU?"

Historically,  
cities are  
places of  
superstition.

After all, people come to them  
from all over the world, from  
small towns and villages, places  
they've lived for generations, to  
inhabit giant mazes of glass and  
steel, shadow and merciless light.

They'd cling to beliefs from  
home about what keeps  
you safe, and what to avoid.

A black cat crosses your path,  
you'll be plagued by bad luck.

A thirteenth guest at dinner  
means someone in the  
party will die at midnight.

My great-grandfather,  
Alan Wayne, understood  
the power of superstition.  
As such, he was one  
of the first men to  
eliminate a thirteenth  
floor from his buildings.

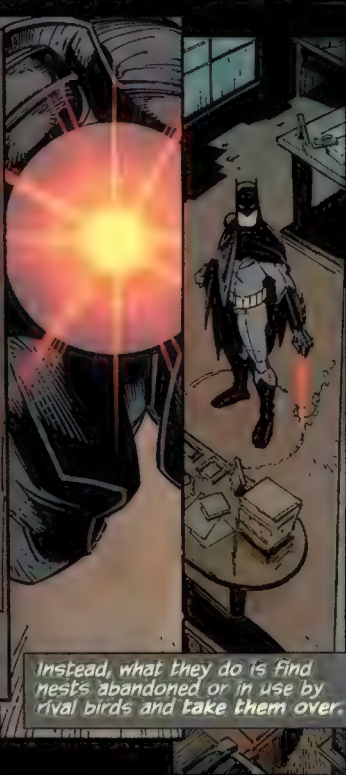
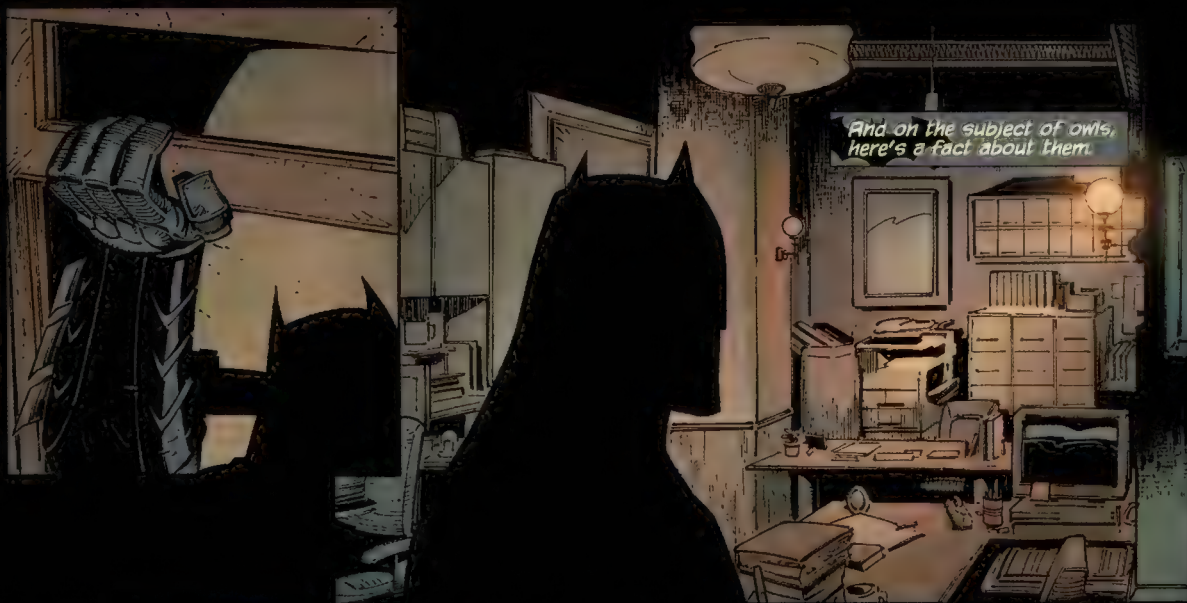
Funny thing, though. To really make  
good on the superstition, you were  
supposed to leave a small space  
in the building between floors twelve  
and fourteen, a false floor, to contain  
the bad luck of number thirteen.

A space sealed off from the world,  
inaccessible. Just a blank slot in the  
building. An absence like a breath  
held when passing a graveyard.

A space just big  
enough--in theory--  
for a man to hide in.  
Perhaps a killer  
dressed like an owl.

















"IT STILL EXISTS,  
DOESN'T IT?"

THE ALAN  
WAYNE TRUST FOR  
ASSISTING YOUNG  
ARCHITECTS. IT'S A  
FUND TO BE USED  
FOR PROGRESSIVE  
ADDITIONS  
TO GOTHAM'S  
SKYLINE.

"PULL UP THE ADDRESSES OF ALL THE  
BUILDINGS FUNDED BY THAT TRUST  
OVER THE LAST CENTURY AND A HALF."



I'M  
UPLOADING THE  
ADDRESSES  
NOW.

THERE ARE  
NEARLY TWENTY  
BUILDINGS IN ALL,  
ROUGHLY ONE EVERY  
DECADE FOR THE  
LAST HUNDRED AND  
FIFTY YEARS...



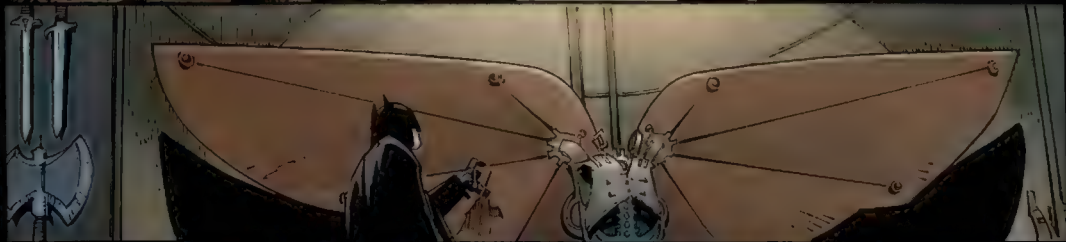








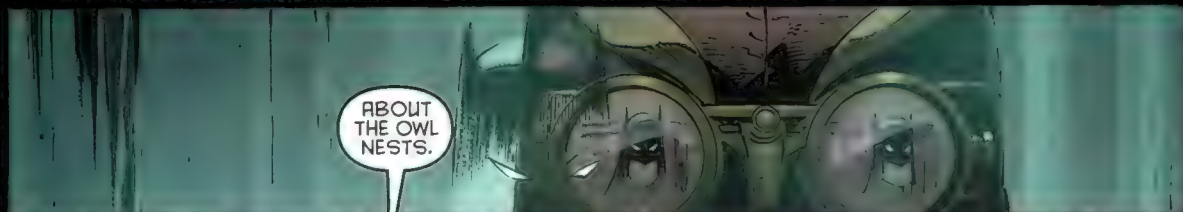
ALFRED.  
I WANT YOU  
TO OPEN ALAN  
WAYNE'S  
CRYPT.



SIR?

HE WAS  
RIGHT.

I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND.



ABOUT  
THE OWL  
NESTS.



WHAT  
ABOUT  
THEM?  
SIR?

THEY'RE  
IN OUR  
HOMES.



JUNE, 2006



ALL THIS  
TIME. RIGHT  
UNDER OUR  
FE--

SIR?

CRABOODOO!

# The THIRTEENTH HOUR

Writer

**SCOTT  
SNYDER**

Pencils

**GREG  
CAPULLO**

Inks

**JONATHAN  
GLAPION**

Colors

**FEO**

Letters

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COMICRAFT'S JIMMY  
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Associate Editor

**HARVEY RICHARDS**

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**MIKE MARTS**

Cover By

**CAPULLO & FEO**

Variant Cover By

**IVAN REIS,  
JOE PRADO &  
ROD REIS**

Batman

Created by

**BOB KANE**



**NEXT: FACE THE COURT!**





### SUPERGIRL

**MICHAEL GREEN & MIKE JOHNSON**  
 (writers)  
**MAHMUD ASRAR**  
 (artist)

#### 1. What do you love about writing/drawing this character?

Michael & Mike: We love mixing epic action with Kara's personal journey as she explores a strange world, and we love writing a character who is still learning what it means to be a hero.

Mahmud: It's an opportunity to draw Supergirl starting from scratch. It's a chance to define her for a whole new age. What's not to love?

#### 2. What is your favorite thing about your part in The New 52?

Michael & Mike: It's great being able to introduce Supergirl and the DCU to readers who are new to comics, and to reintroduce her to veteran readers who may not have followed her adventures before. We also really want longtime fans of Kara to enjoy this new incarnation of such a beloved and iconic character.

Mahmud: That I'm drawing Supergirl! Seriously though, this has all the factors I look forward



to drawing in a superhero book. A young and strong heroine who I, along with my fellow creators, get to realize.

#### 3. Can you tease the villains she will be fighting in upcoming issues?

Michael & Mike: We introduce a new arch-villain for her in issue #3 who undergoes a startling transformation in issue #4, and then Supergirl runs into a spacefaring villain in #5 who will play a key role in Kara's immediate future on Earth.

Mahmud: We'll rack your "brain"!

#### 4. What new thing are you doing with this character?

Michael & Mike: We will be showing that Supergirl might have new abilities different from her cousin's powers. Who's to say our yellow sun affects every Kryptonian the same way?

Mahmud: This is the Supergirl you know, but she's not the Kara you're familiar with.

#### 5. How will you shock readers?

Michael & Mike: There is a huge secret surrounding Kara's origin that even she doesn't know yet. She will be just as shocked as the readers!

#### 5.2 What is your favorite page in the first few issues and why?

Michael & Mike: We love them all! But we are especially fond of the "sunrise" page in issue #1. Mahmud is able to evoke so much emotion using just close shots of her eyes as she sees the yellow sun for the first time.

Mahmud: First issue, page 4. This page was where I got to portray Kara genuinely for the first time.



### DC UNIVERSE PRESENTS

**PAUL JENKINS** (writer)  
**BERNARD CHANG** (artist)

#### 1. What do you love about writing/drawing this character?

Paul: Deadman has this seemingly impossible task: to fix the lives of others while at the same time trying to make sense of his own. People love a good story of redemption, so we cannot help but root for him.

Bernard: Every issue, Deadman possesses a huge cast of characters, all of whom need to be distinct – damn you, Paul Jenkins! To make things fun, I like to hide Easter Eggs in the art...

#### 2. What is your favorite thing about your part in The New 52?

Paul: I think DCU Presents stands out a little because we were given five issues to really define the character, so we could draw from Deadman's past and still take a new approach to him.

Bernard: I'm really enjoying the moodiness of our story. It's heavy-hearted and reflective. I think it's great that DC publishes rock 'em-sock 'em superhero books and also ones that are more introspective.

#### 3. Can you tease the villains he will be fighting in upcoming issues?

Paul: Deadman battles mostly himself and solves the problems of others. That being said, we are introducing a cool new fallen angel-type character called the Son of Morning, who happens to know the answer to every single question there is.

#### 4. What new thing are you doing with this character?

Paul: Once upon a time, the goddess Rama came to Deadman and said, "You are going to inhabit the lives of others and resolve their issues." Well, for the first time in a while, he is going to challenge her. He will ask her, "Why?"

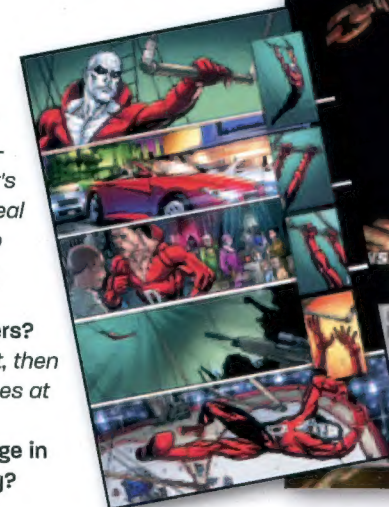
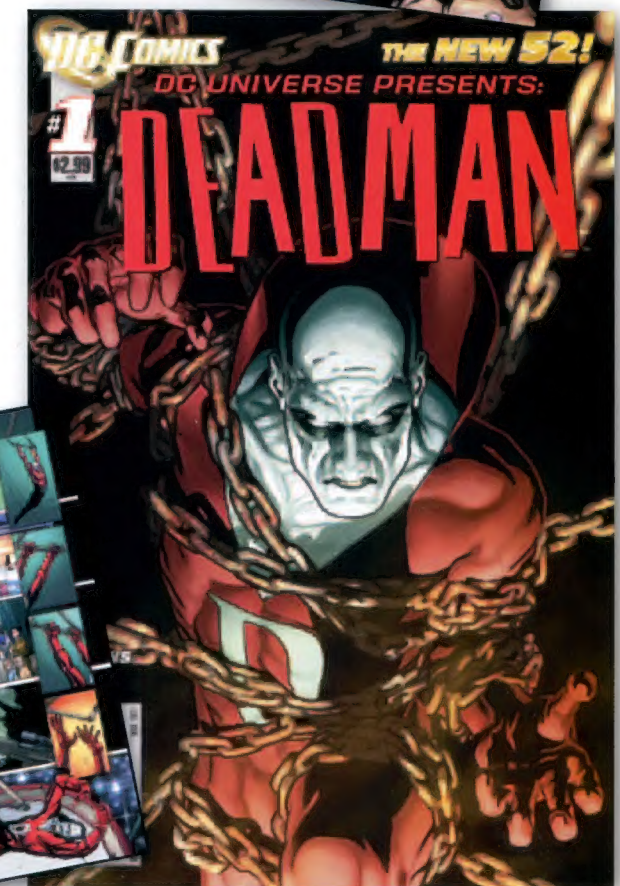
Bernard: I think the most important new thing is infusing some progressive storytelling techniques into a structure that is easy for first-time readers to understand. It's about capturing the magic Neal Adams and Carmine Infantino first brought to the character, while adding my own twist.

#### 5. How will you shock readers?

Bernard: If we told you that, then there wouldn't be any surprises at the end of the book, right?

#### 5.2 What is your favorite page in the first few issues and why?

Bernard: The opening sequence of #1 where we recapped Deadman's origin and his first meeting with Rama, having multiple timelines occurring on the same page. Originally, we had just the panels flashing back to different scenes. Then we decided to inject a secondary tier of panels weaving his trapeze act, swinging back and forth just before the fatal shot, with his backstory, and then his fall, impact, and fall again into the netherworld.





**W**hat's the most Google-able series in all of DC's NEW 52? Why, FLASH, of course!

Followers of the Fastest Man Alive already know it to be among the most entertaining and electrifying series we produce, and that the team of Francis Manapul and Brian Buccellato have crafted a Flash for the ages.

But FLASH readers are also pretty hip to the fact that the series dangles crazy-sounding comic-book science terms every other page. Stuff like "the law of congestion." Or "augmented cognition." And, get this, "pig-extracted extracellular matrix." What's even more mind-bending is that all of this seemingly made-up comic-book science is ACTUALLY REAL.

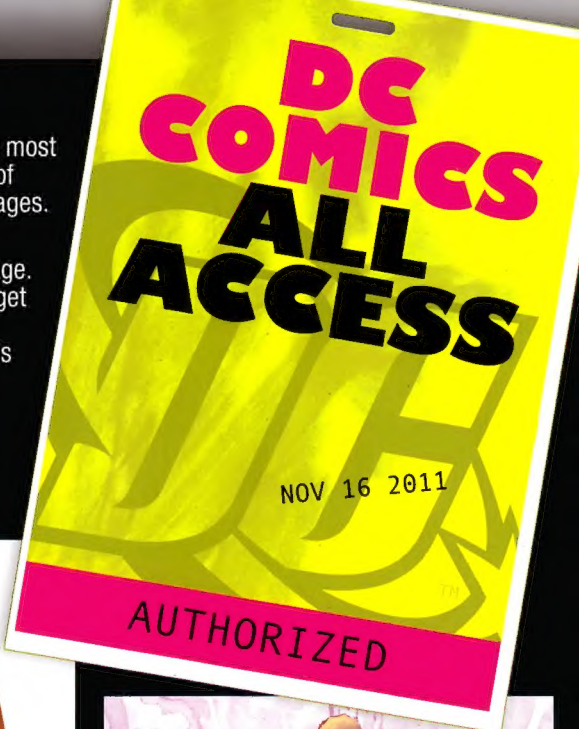
Go ahead, Google it all. We'll wait right here.

See, Francis and Brian pride themselves on applying cutting-edge science and technology to a series that understandably must move much faster than every other comic book out there. When you read it, you'll not only get a humdinger of a tale, you'll learn a really cool thing or three.

FLASH #3 is out next week, so be sure to reserve your copy now. I'm not exaggerating when I say this is a series that we'll all look back on someday and say, "Man, that was some of the most fun comics I've ever read..."

And those will be memories you won't need to Google.

—Brian Cunningham  
Editor



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BATMAN 3, January, 2012. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 308, Congers, NY 10920. Annual subscription rate (12 issues) \$24.99. Canadian subscribers must add \$12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add \$12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 2012 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork. This book is manufactured at a facility holding chain-of-custody certification. This paper is made with sustainably managed North American fiber. For Advertising and Custom Publishing contact [dcadvertising@dc.com](mailto:dcadvertising@dc.com). For details on DC Comics Ratings, visit [dcmratings.com](http://dcmratings.com). Printed by Transcontinental Interglobe, Beauveville, QC, Canada. 11/4/11.

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# THE PROLETARIAT

VARIANTS BY:  
HALO & SCANDOG

